

Hybrid

by Tacotitan

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Summary: Astrid and Hiccup are both outcasts. He is the scrawny, screw-up son of the chief. She is a human-Night Fury hybrid, barely tolerated by most dragons. When Hiccup shoots Astrid down, their fates, and the fates of Berk and the dragons become intertwined.

1. Chapter 1

Hey guys, Taco here with my latest story, Hybrid! Now, I know most of you just want to get the story, go right ahead and skip my ramblings. If, however, you want to hear the tale how this story got conceived, then listen here.

Several months ago, I was browsing about this site trying to sate my appetite for Hicstrid fics when I stumbled about the story Hybrid. I'd have passed it by, but it was early in the morning, and I was sure it was worth a laugh, as I was sure the the story would have been just ridiculous, so I took a look.

I was proven wrong.

Yeah, it was somewhat rough around the edges, but it was far better than I expected. It was well-written, it was fun to read, it was... unfortunately, incomplete. To make matters worse, it seems as though it has been abandoned, as the last update was years ago, and the author has yet to respond to any of the people who are begging to post more chapters. True, the author has every right to stop whatever story he has doing, it IS his story, but that still didn't make it any less disappointing.

I, however, decided to take another route. I took it upon myself to take my own original spin on the basic concept, and this story is the end result.

Anyhow, I hope you enjoy it!

* * *

><p>This is Berk. It's twelve days North of hopeless, and a few degrees South of freezing to death. It's located solidly on the meridian of misery.

My village. In a word, sturdy. It's been here for seven generations, but every single building is new.

We have fishing, hunting, and a charming view of the sunset. The only problems are the pests. Most places have mice or mosquitos. We have...

A teenager with green eyes and brown hair opens a door and sees a large, spiny, winged beast outside his door. He is just barely able to slam the door shut as the monster breathes fire, covering the door in flames but leaving himself completely intact.

"Dragons."

The boy opens the door again and runs out as men and women exit their homes, weapons in hand.

Most people would leave. Not us. _We're Vikings. We have stubbornness issues._

The battle begins, and the boy is headed for the heart of it.

My name is Hiccup. Great name, I know. But it's not the worst. Parents believe a hideous name will frighten off gnomes and trolls. As if our charming Viking demeanor wouldn't do that.

An explosion goes off, and Hiccup is knocked to the ground by a Viking whose beard is covered in embers. The man shouts out a war cry straight in Hiccup's face before changing his tone and shouting "mornin'" before running off. Hiccup manages to quickly get back up and, despite having other Vikings yelling at him to go back inside, does not stop running. What does finally stop him and saves him from being burned by a Nadder's fire is the hand of one particularly large Viking grabbing the back of his fur vest.

"Hiccup!? What is he doing out again? What ARE you doing out!? Get inside!"

With that, the large Viking pushes Hiccup off before refocusing on the battle.

That's Stoick the Vast, chief of the tribe. They say when he was a baby, he popped a dragon's head clean off of its shoulders. Do I believe it?

Stoick spots a dragon making off with a sheep, and quickly responds by throwing a wooden cart at it. The sheep is dropped as the cart shatters against the reptile.

Yes, I do.

Stoick turns to ask one of his subordinates what dragons have been

spotted, who quickly responds with, "Gronckles, Nadder's, Zipplebacks. Oh, and Hoark saw a Monstrous Nightmare."

A fireball hits a house behind Stoick, causing embers and flames to scatter. The subordinate raises his shield to protect his head, while Stoick simply flicks away a flaming piece of wood that landed on his metal shoulder-plate.

"Any Night Furies?"

"None so far."

"Good."

Meanwhile, Hiccup makes his way into a building filled with weapons as the other Vikings raise large torches to light up the sky. Once inside, a Viking, one who is missing a few limbs, greets him.

"Nice of you to join the party! I thought you'd be carried off."

Taking off his vest and replacing it with a smithing apron before getting to work, Hiccup snaps back with, "Who, me? Na, come on, I'm waaaay too muscular for their taste. They wouldn't know what to do with all this."

"Well, they need toothpicks, don't they?"

The meathead with attitude and interchangeable hands is Gobber. I've been his apprentice since I was little. Well, littler.

As Hiccup places several broken weapons on a pile of hot coals, a house in the distance is covered by Nightmare flames.

See? Old village, lots and lots of new houses.

Hiccup hears someone shout "fire," and sees a large barrel of water pulled just outside of forge. A group of teens, all about Hiccup's age, scramble to fill and carry off buckets of water.

That's Fishlegs, Snoutlout, the twins Ruffnut and Tuffnut.

As the other teens run off, one brunette Viking, clad in spikes and dull red clothes, tosses the water in her bucket at one of several burning buildings. As she turns away, a fireball hits the very same building and explodes into a wall of fire. The teen is just outside of the blast range, and walks off unscathed, and the entire sight leaves Hiccup breathless.

And Frieda! I admit I may have a small crush on her, but then, who wouldn't. It also doesn't hurt that she's the only Viking my age who is nice to me.

The other teenagers flock back to her, and they all rush off to get more water.

Oh their job is so much cooler.

Before he can continue to watch the other teens do their job, he is lifted into the air by Gobber's pliers.

"Aw, come on. Let me out, please. I need to make my mark!"

"Oh, you've made plenty of marks, all in the wrong places."

"Please, two minutes, I'll kill a dragon, my life will get infinitely better. I might even get a date!"

"You can't lift a hammer, you can't swing an axe!"

Gobber pauses long enough to hold up a bola before saying, "You can't even throw one of these!"

Just as he finishes, another Viking grabs the bola right out of his hand and throws it at a Gronkle, entangling it and sending it back to Earth. Hiccup proceeds to head towards what appears to be a small cart.

"Okay, fine, but this will throw it for me!"

He places his hand on the relatively large object, causing it to spring open and throw a bola. Gobber was just able to get out of the way, causing the bola to knock out another Viking.

"See? Now this right here is what I'm talking about!"

Hiccup stutters, just barely able to out the words, "Mild calibration issue," before being interrupted.

"Hiccup, if you ever want to get out there, fight dragons, you need to stop all this."

"But you just pointed to all of me."

"Yes, that's it! Stop being all of you!"

"Oh!"

"Oh, yes!"

"You, sir, are playing a dangerous game, keeping this much raw Vikingness contained? There will be consequences!"

"I'll take my chances."

With that, Gobber grabbed a sword and gave it to Hiccup.

"Sword. Sharpen. Now."

Hiccup didn't protest, and proceeded towards the sharpening wheel to do his job.

One day, I'll get out there, because killing a dragon is everything around here. A Nadder head is to get me at least noticed. Gronkles are tough, taking down one of those would definitely get me a girlfriend. A Zippalback? Exotic, two heads, twice the status.

Elsewhere in the village, on one of the catapult towers, Stoick was overlooking the operation of the catapult when another Viking told

him that the dragons had found the sheep. Stoick simply gave orders to fire over the lower bank of the village.

And then there's the Monstrous Nightmare. Only the best Vikings go after those. They have this nasty habit of setting themselves on fire._

Stoick saw a Nightmare break through the walkway of the tower, covered in flames. He grabbed his hammer, ordered his fellow Vikings to reload, and proceeded to smash his hammer into the dragon's face. It took the blows, snapped it's jaws at the Viking chief, and flew off as a high-pitched whine raised out from the background noise.

But the ultimate prize is the dragon no one's ever seen. We call it theâ€|_

"Night Fury! Get down!

The catapult exploded in flames, forcing Stoick and the other Vikings to jump into the waters below.

* * *

><p>A dark figure flew over the flames as the catapult crumbled. It looked back, keen blue eyes studying the damage it just caused.<p>

My aim is getting sloppy; I almost missed the tower entirely. Still, they can't use it nowâ€|_

Another whine precedes another explosion, this time hitting the catapult tower in the middle and causing it to fall apart.

Good, now it will take longer for the Vikings to repair it._

The dark figure turned its attention back to the battle that raged below it, looking for a suitable target.

My name is Astrid. I'm a dragon, partially. Technically, I'm part Night Fury and partâ€|_

Astrid flies past one of the giant torches, and though none of the people below can see it, for second, the light reveals her form.

â€|_Viking, human, however you want to say it. Not like any of the Vikings below would think of me as one. They'd treat me the same as any other dragon, like a mindless, ruthless monster that deserves to have her head mounted on some wall. Not that most of the dragons treat or think of me that much better. Still, at least they don't try to kill me, so long that I do my part in these raids. Then, there's the only other Night Fury in the group, Toothless. He's probably the only dragon that I could consider my friend._

Astrid spots a catapult that is turning towards a large group of Gronkles, and begins to yaw towards it in a long arc, taking her time to get the best possible shot.

Like him, I don't take part in the close-up combat, nor do I grab

any of the food. Instead, our job is to take out catapults and other buildings that might be a problem for the other dragons. Now, time for the next hit._

* * *

><p>Hiccup, now at the edge of a cliff, sets up his bola-launcher and looks for something to fire at.</p>

"Come on. Give me something to shoot at, give me something to shoot at."

For a moment, all he hears are distant cries of dragons already on the ground before the familiar high-pitched whine returns. Another tower explodes in flames, and for a second, Hiccup sees a silhouette. He quickly aims and pulls the trigger, the recoil throwing him off the launcher. He hears what sounds like a girl shrieking, but he pins it on his imagination.

* * *

><p>Astrid, once free with wings spread wide, now found herself tangled in a bola. Time seemed to slow as she fell out of the sky, and she felt intense pain coming from her wing.</p>

_No, no, no! This can't be happening. This can't be happening! No one could have seen me! How could this be happening?!"

Astrid struggled to get loose from the ropes, but she couldn't break them. All she could do was to brace herself for the impending crash landing. Time sped up, she broke through several trees, and she finally lost consciousness when she hit the ground.

* * *

><p>Hiccup, now standing and having seen a silhouette land towards the trees on the other side of the island, felt overwhelming joy rush through him.</p>

"I hit it? Yes, I hit it! Did anybody see that?"

He was answered by the sound of his launcher being crunched up by a Monstrous Nightmare.

"â€¢ Except for you."

Hiccup broke into a sprint, screaming as the dragon chased after him. He finally stopped behind one of the torches, and he felt an extreme heat emanate from behind him. The Nightmare went around the torch, but before it could do anything, Stoick jumped in the air and kicked the Nightmare in the head. The two giants faced each other, both ready to fight the other. The Nightmare attempted to breath fire, but all it could muster was a small amount of flame that failed to hit Stoick.

"You're all out."

Stoick proceeded to strike a series of blows on the Nightmare's head before it finally flew off.

Oh, and there's one more thing you need to know.

The torch that Hiccup hid behind buckled and fell over, with the flaming tip breaking off.

"Sorry, Dad."

The top of the torch crashed through the village, causing several Vikings to let go of some dragons that were captured in the nets.

"Okay, but I hit a Night Fury."

Stoick immediately grabbed Hiccup by the back of his vest and began to drag him towards their home.

"It's not like the last few times, Dad! I really, actually hit it! You guys were busy, and I had a very clear shot! It went down off Raven Point. Let's get a search party out there andâ€!"

Stoick let go, turned around and thundered out the word,
"Stop!"

"Just stop. Every time you step outside, disaster falls. Can you not see that I have bigger problems? Winter is almost here and I have an entire village to feed!"

"Between you and me, the village could do with a little less feeding, don't you think?"

"This isn't a joke, Hiccup! Why can't you follow the simplest orders?"

"I can't stop myself. I see a dragon and I have to just kill it, you know? It's who I am, Dad."

"You're many things, Hiccup. But a dragon killer is not one of them. Get back to the house."

Stoick turned his attention to Gobber, who came behind Hiccup.

"Make sure he gets there. I have his mess to clean up."

As Hiccup walked the path to his house, Tuffnut, Ruffnut, Fishlegs, and Snoutlout just laughed at him. Frieda, meanwhile, is simply silent as she feels sorry for the scrawny teen.

"Quite the performance."

"I've never seen anyone mess up that badly. That helped!"

"Thank you, thank you. I was trying."

Snoutlout's laughter was stopped when Gobber knocked him to the ground.

It only took a couple of minutes to get to the Haddock house, and as they took the final couple of steps to reach it, Hiccup spoke up.

"I really did hit one."

"Sure, Hiccup."

"He never listens!"

"It runs in the family."

"And when he does, it's with this disappointed scowl, like someone skimped on meat in his sandwich. 'Excuse me, barmaid. I'm afraid you brought me the wrong offspring. I ordered an extra-large boy with beefy arms, extra guts and glory on the side. This here, this is a talking fishbone.'"

"Now you're thinking about this all wrong. It's not so much what you look like, it's what's inside that he can't stand."

"Thank you for summing that up."

"Look, the point is, stop trying so hard to be something you're not."

"I just want to be one of you guys."

With that, Hiccup went inside the house, only to run out the back door and towards Raven's Point.

* * *

><p>Author's note: And there you have it, the first chapter of Hybrid. I hope you enjoyed it!

The image was made by my dear friend, DarKenn, who is also my editor, so a good portion of the credit should go to him. He did this while also working on a My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic fan fiction involving dragons. If you're into MLP, then look up "The Immigrants" by DarKenn on FIMFiction.**

>

Anyway, remember to leave a review. I'd like to know what you guys think of the story so far.

2. Chapter 2

Howdy guys! I bet you guys didn't expect a story so soon, now did ya? Well, I won't keep you hanging, here ya go!

* * *

><p>Where could that dragon have possibly landed? Gods know how long I've been looking for it out here.

Hiccup looked up from his notebook to find, once again, nothing. He gave a frustrated sigh as he drew another mark on the map in his notebook. His frustration gets the better of him, though, and what starts as a small X became a giant scribble that took up most of the page. With another sigh, he put the notebook away as he continued searching.

"Oh, the gods hate me. Some people lose a knife or a helmet. Nope,

not me. I manage to lose an entire dragon."

Hiccup stops to take a breath, and looks back towards where Berk would be.

"Maybe I should go get Frieda? I mean, it will be quicker to find the dragon if two people are looking forâ€|"

His thoughts come to a grinding halt as he hears a groan towards his right.

* * *

><p>Everything was sore as Astrid came to. Her mind was numb from the crash, and she couldn't feel anything besides the aching in her whole body. It took her a few seconds to recall the night before, but once she did, her senses went on high alert. She tried to break free from the ropes, but nothing went lose.<p>

I need to break free beforeâ€|

Her thoughts stopped when she hears footsteps. Her full attention is brought to a small figure as it comes around the boulder in front of her, her face full of fear and dread.

_Noâ€|
>

* * *

><p>That's what a Night Fury looks like?

Hiccup was both confused and shocked by what was in front of him. Though no one has ever seen a Night Fury, he always assumed one would be big, terrifying, and covered in scales and spikes. What was in front of him, however, looked nothing like what he had imagined. Instead, wrapped in the bola was what looked like a teenage girl with a black tail and large, black wings. She had long, blonde hair that was free and somewhat wild. Her ears were pointed, and were black at the tips. The edge of each of her cheeks was covered in a patch of black scales, but her skin was otherwise fair. Covering her was a black top and skirt that was as dark as her wings, and looked like they were made out of scales.

It took Hiccup a moment for him to remember why he was here, but once he did, he drew out his dagger.

"Alright, I can do this, I can do this. I am a Viking, I am a Viking, I am a Vikingâ€|"

Hiccup was about to plunge the knife in when his eyes wandered back to her face. Her eyes were wide in fear; her mouth was open slightly as her breathing became deeper and more panicked. The sight caused him to lower the dagger, if only briefly, before he rose it back up.

* * *

><p>I can't let him do this!

Astrid again tried frantically to escape from the ropes, even hoping to get her tail free to whack the Viking away. With all hope seemingly lost, she could only watch as he was ready to do the job. Her breaths became gasps, her heart rate vastly increased, it was almost to the point of fainting. However, her body slowed down as he dropped the dagger.

Does he want me alive for something?

Her thoughts were interrupted quickly, though, as the Viking brought the dagger back up, and started cutting the ropes. Once he cut the last one, she immediately sprang up, pouncing at the scrawny boy and holding him up by the neck with both of her hands

* * *

><p>If Hiccup wasn't so scared, he'd be scolding himself for what he did. Right now, he was very much afraid, and he struggled for a minute before realizing he wasn't strong enough to get out of the girl's grasp. His green eyes darted wildly before they shifted towards her blue and dragon-like eyes.</p>

* * *

><p>Astrid felt numerous emotions flow through her all at once. At first, she was absolutely enraged, thinking that, for all she knew, he was the one who shot her down. However, that thought translated to the fact he cut her loose just a moment ago. This made her confused as to what to do with him.</p>

Why did this Viking cut me loose? He had every opportunity to kill me, and he just cut me loose?

She was about to let him go, but she figured she wouldn't let this Viking go without so much as a good scare. She took a deep breath, and the Viking, knowing what Night Furies can do, was expecting to be blasted. All she did, though, was let out a loud cry. It sounded human, but it may as well have been a regular Night Fury screech, as her cry managed to intimidate the boy. She then dropped him onto his feet, staring him down. After focusing on her cold stare for another moment, the boy fainted from the tension.

Some Vikingâ€|

After taking one last look at the scrawny teen, Astrid ran off. After she was a good distance away, the girl decided it was time to take flight. She spread her wings, but she immediately stopped and dropped to the ground in agony. Astrid's right wing was in excruciating pain, and when she looked at it, it was splayed in a way she knew wasn't right.

Noâ€| my wing's broken. Why didn't I notice it earlierâ€|

Astrid shook the thoughts out of her head. Now, she decided, was not the time to think about that. Instead, she had to focus on trying to survive, and with her wing in its current condition, she knew it wasn't the best idea to move much. Right now, she needed to find shelter.

* * *

><p>It was a couple of hours before Hiccup woke up, and by then, it was beginning to get dark, so he made his way back to Berk. The sky was a bright orange when he reached the edge of the village. Hiccup was hesitant about going straight home, so he headed towards Gobber's forge. Before he could get there, however, he was pulled out of the path by Frieda.</p>

Hiccup unconsciously scratched the back of his head as he said, "O-oh, hi, Frieda. H-how are you doingâ€| today?"

"Hey, I haven't seen you all day. You kinda got me worried. Where were you?"

"Oh. Uh, I was just in my houseâ€| all day."

"No, you weren't. I checked to see if you were still there before noon."

"W-well, um, you seeâ€| "

Frieda crossed her arms before saying, "You went looking for that Night Fury you said you shot down, didn't you?"

"â€| Ya, I did."

Hiccup noticed that she had a smile on her lips. That was certainly not the reaction he was expecting from her. Still, that brought a small smile on his face.

"Well, next time, maybe you could ask me to help you. So, did you find anything?"

The scrawny teen's smile disappeared as quickly as it appeared. He didn't want to lie to Frieda, but he couldn't tell her the truth, that he couldn't kill a dragon.

"I-I did, but I think it broke free from the ropes before I could get to it. I did hear Night Furies are strong."

"Well, sorry to hear that, Hiccup."

For a moment, the two shared an awkward silence before Frieda spoke.

"Oh, just remembered, your dad was looking for you. I think he had something important he wanted to discuss with you."

"Well, that can't be good."

Frieda just shrugged. "Well, I wouldn't keep the Chief of the village waiting. I'll see you later, Hiccup."

With that, Frieda walked away as Hiccup simply watched. When she was no longer in sight, he finally forced himself to march on home. When he did get back to his house, Hiccup tried to quietly sneak past his father, but he was waiting on the other side of door.

"U-uh, hi, dad."

"Hiccup, I've been waiting for you!"

"So I've heard!" interrupted Hiccup.

"You've got your wish, son."

Hiccup eyes immediately went wide, but before he could say anything, Stoick handed him an ax.

"You'll need this for dragon training tomorrow morning."

"B-but dad, I don't want to!"

"It's time, Hiccup. Do the family proud while I'm away."

"Dad, wait!"

"What is it, Hiccup? I have to hurry."

"I don't want to fight dragons."

"HAHA! Come on, son, yes you do!"

"Let me rephrase, Dad. I've figured out I can't kill dragons."

"And what happened to make you think that?"

"Well, I encountered a Terrible Terror earlier, and I, uh, couldn't hit it...hard enough..."

"Don't you use a dagger?"

"I, uh, lost mine when I saw it."

"Hmph. Still, you'll learn how to kill dragons. You'll see, son, you won't regret your decision. Just stay strong. I'll be back, probably." Stoick then left the house, carrying a basket.

"I immediately regret your decision."

* * *

><p>Alright guys! Hoped you enjoyed the second chapter. Got to see the meeting of Hiccup and Astrid, among other things.

A lot of details that are depicted in this chapter changed much since I first set out to do this story, no more so than Astrid herself. Originally, I wanted a version of Astrid that was mostly human, just one who could fly, had a tail, and could breath fire. As you can see by not only the chapter above, but the cover pic, that gave out to a more, as Snotlout put it, "dragon-esque" version of Astrid.

**Astrid's injury also changed. Up until I was writing this chapter, I was dead set on having one of her tail fins torn off and have her trapped in the cove. However, I realized Astrid wouldn't really be trapped there. True, she couldn't fly out, but since she has human hands, she could probably climb out with a little help from a wing flap here and there. I talked to DarKenn again, and after a little

discussion, it was decided that Astrid would instead be technically free to roam across the island, but she still needed something that kept her in the area around the cove, so she has instead has a broken wing.**

Anyway, the next chapter will take a little longer to put up. This one was only up so soon because it was, for the most part, already complete when the first one was posted.

Thank you for reading, and if you got anything you'd like to say, leave a review.

3. Chapter 3

To think I dreamed of doing thisâ€|_

Hiccup, axe in hand, walked along the lonely path towards the arena. He had woken up late as he had trouble getting to sleep last night, and part of him had wished that dragon training had already started. His hopes were dashed when he saw the other teens, following Gobber, still making their way towards the arena's gates. By the time the gate was opened, Hiccup had closed enough of the distance between himself and the other teens that he could overhear what they were saying.

"I hope I get some serious burns."

"I'm hoping for some mauling, like on my shoulder or lower back."

"I'd rather get through this without much of a scratch."

"Yeah, doesn't seem smart to be looking forward to getting mauled." Hiccup said as he crossed the threshold into the arena.

"Oh great. Who let him in?"

Before anyone could respond, Gobber began the day's lesson with a shout.

"Let's get started! The recruit who does best will win the honor of killing his first dragon in front of the entire village."

Snoutlout, always ready to make fun of the chief's heir, asked, "Hiccup already killed a Night Fury, soâ€| does that disqualify him orâ€|?"

The teens burst into laughter as they walked away from the scrawny Viking, except for Frieda, who walked with him towards the center of the arena.

"Hey, glad you could make it. Now I don't have to deal with Snoutlout alone."

"Well, I couldn't let that happen to you. That's a fate worse than death."

The two chuckled before they got into line with the other teens.

Maybe this won't be so bad after all.

"Behind these doors are just a few of the many species you will learn to fight!"

He pointed at one of the many doors and of the arena before shouting, "The Deadly Nadder!"

"Speed eight, armor sixteen."

Hiccup turned to his left to see who just spoke up and, not to his surprise, it was Fishlegs. What did surprise him was that the normally timid Viking looked focused and confident.

"The Hideous Zippleback!"

"Plus eleven stealth, times two."

"The Monstrous Nightmare!"

"Firepower fifteen."

"The Terrible Terror."

"Attack eight, venom twelve."

"Can you stop that?!"

By this point, Gobber was obviously annoyed by Fishlegs' stats, and took a second before announcing the last dragon type."

"And, the Gronckle."

Fishlegs couldn't help himself, and he simply whispered the one to Frieda and Hiccup, though he was so quite that the heir couldn't really make it out. Snoutlout, meanwhile, just noticed Gobber's good hand was on the lever to the Gronckle's door.

"Wait, aren't you gonna teach us first?"

Gobber, with a crazy glint in his eye, simply stated that he believed in learning "on the job." With that, he pushed the lever down, and the Gronckle burst through its cell doors. The Hiccup and the others scattered, all trying to avoid being targeted by the dragon.

"Today is about survival. If you get blasted, you're dead! Quick, what's the first thing you'll need?"

"A doctor?" Hiccup asked, only partially joking.

"Plus five speed?" asked Fishlegs.

"A shield?" answered Frieda.

"Shields. Go!"

Everyone made a mad dash towards the closest shield while Gobber explained how important they were. Hiccup, though, was having trouble putting one on his arm, forcing Gobber to help him before shoving him

off back into the fray. To the small teen, the arena was filled with chaos, and he was having trouble making out what exactly was happening. Before he knew it, the twins were out of the session, and Gobber was shouting out another tip.

"Those shields are good for another thing: Noise! Make lots of it to throw off a dragon's aim!"

With that, the remaining teens banged their weapons into their shields, giving the Gronckle some trouble targeting them. This gave Hiccup time to go hide behind a weapon rack as Gobber asked the class a question.

"All dragons have a limited number of shots. How much does a Gronckle have?"

Snoutlout gave an answer before Fishlegs corrected him. While he was distracted, the Gronckle shot Fishlegs' shield out from his hand, and the overweight teen ran towards the entrance of the arena.

At Gobber's orders, and after narrowly avoiding a fireball, Hiccup came out of hiding just as Snoutlout was knocked out of the training session. Frieda ended up right next to him as she avoided the blast that got Snoutlout.

"So, got any ideas on what to do?"

"Yeah, move!"

Frieda sped off as the Gronckle shot another fireball, forcing Hiccup to block it with his shield and knocking it out from his hand.

"One shot left!"

Hiccup focused on getting back his shield as it rolled away before he saw the dragon was on his tail.

"HICCUP!"

Before he knew it, he was pinned between the cold arena wall and the Gronckle's face.

No, not now!

Hiccup flinched as he prepared to be blasted, but before he could meet a fiery end, Gobber pulled the dragon away and causing it to scorch the wall instead.

"And that's six. Go back to bed you overgrown sausage."

Gobber threw the dragon back into its cell and quickly locked its doors.

"You'll get another chance, don't you worry."

Turning his attention back to the class, the blacksmith shouted, "Remember, a dragon will alwaysâ€|"

Gobber turned his attention to his apprentice before continuing, "â€|always go for the kill."

The other teens made their way out of the arena, followed shortly by Gobber, leaving Hiccup alone in the arena.

Then why didn't she?

Without thinking, Hiccup headed towards where he last saw the dragon girl.

* * *

><p>To say Astrid didn't have a good night was an understatement. The night before, she headed towards a small cove she spotted near where she had crashed, thinking the entrance would have provided a suitable place for her to rest and mend her broken wing. When she got there, though, she realized that she wouldn't have been able to fit with her wing splayed as it was. Ultimately, due to the pain of her wing, the dragon girl was forced to take refuge under a couple of trees that were near the cove. For most of the night, Astrid remained on alert for would be predators and dragon slayers before she became too tired and fell asleep.</p>

The sun was at its peak when Astrid woke up. However, she didn't feel rested and, with her wing aching as it was, the girl was a bit agitated.

Why does everything have to go wrong for me now? What did I do to deserveâ€¦

Astrid's train of thought was interrupted when she heard a rustling of some bushes. Instinctively, she scanned her surroundings before she saw the same Viking boy from the day before. She gave him a cold, hard stare.

What do you want? Why are you here?

At that point, her attention turned to what the boy had in his hands. To her confusion, there wasn't a dagger or some other weapon. Instead, he was scratching a stick against some sort of flat object.

What are you doing?

* * *

><p>Hiccup added the last few details of his sketch of the dragon girl in front of him, his mind focusing on getting the details just right. When he felt it was to his satisfaction, he smiled as he turned his attention back to the subject depicted in his book. His smile instantly faded away, however, when he noticed that the girl's eyes were focused squarely on him. For a moment, he was still with fear until he realized the girl wasn't exactly doing anything else aside from staring curiously at him. Caution got the better of Hiccup, and he took a couple steps back before he ran back towards the village.</p>

* * *

><p>Well, that was weird.

With the Viking gone, Astrid turned her attention to her other needs. Right then, her stomach growled, reminding her that she hadn't eaten anything since before the last raid. Ignoring her wing's ache as she got up, the dragon girl looked around for anything resembling food. Unfortunately, the only thing that she spotted was a bunch of berries on a nearby bush.

Well, it's better than nothing, I guess.

She plucked one of berries of its branch and chucked it into her mouth. Almost immediately, Astrid spat it back out due to revulsion.

So much for thatâ€| Need to find something else.

She was about to continue looking for food when she felt a raindrop hit her good wing, followed shortly by another. The girl looked up and saw dark clouds taking up the entirety of the sky.

Great, just what I needed. Anything worth eating on this island would be either taking shelter orâ€|

She looked back in the direction that the Viking boy ran off, thinking of the food that the village held before shaking her head.

No, not worth it. Besides, if the weather is going to be as a bad as I think it is, I'd get sick getting there.

Sighing in defeat, she walked back to the spot she rested the night before, curled up and did her best to remain dry and warm.

* * *

><p>By the time Hiccup made it home, it was already raining heavily. When it became time to go to the Great Hall to eat, it got so bad that Hiccup was soaked to the bone by the time he made the relatively short walk to the hall. Once he got inside, he saw the Gobber and the other teens eating and talking about dragon training.<p>

How long have they been here?

Hiccup made his way towards the table the others were at and picked up a plate. Before he could sit down, though, Snoutlout took the vacant seat and beamed an arrogant smile.

Really, Snoutlout?

Moving around Snoutlout, he picked up a cup from the table and took a seat on the next one over. Before he could begin his meal, Gobber slammed a book down on the other table.

"The Dragon Manual: everything we know about every dragon we know of."

Gobber paused to hear the storm outside before he continued.

"No attacks tonight. Study up."

As Gobber left, the other teens began to complain.

"Wait, you mean read?"

"While we're still alive?"

"Why read words when you can just kill the stuff the words tell you about?"

At the point, Fishlegs began to ramble on about various facts that, what little he could make out, Hiccup found interesting. However, he was the only one to think so.

"Yeah. That sounds great. There was a chance I was going to read thatâ€|"

"But nowâ€|"

"You guys read. I'll go kill stuff."

With that, Snoutlout made his way out of the great hall, followed by the twins and Fishlegs, the last one still spouting out dragon factoids.

Well, guess that leaves me to study with Frieda.

Hiccup moved his dinner over to Frieda's table, but paused when he noticed Frieda was getting out of her seat.

"Did you read through the manual already?" asked the heir.

"Huhâ€| No, I haven't yet."

"Wellâ€| maybe we could read through it together if you had theâ€|"

"I'd love to, Hiccup, butâ€| I gotta get going."

"Ohâ€| alright then. I guess I'll see youâ€|" Hiccup stopped when Frieda made her way towards the door, leaving him alone with the book.

"â€|tomorrow."

With a sigh, Hiccup took a seat across from where Frieda sat only moments ago and opened the Dragon Manual to begin reading.

* * *

><p>As skies thundered and the rain continued to pour, countless dragons took shelter deep within the numerous caves of the Den. However, at the edge of one cave was a dragon, one covered in scales as dark as night.<p>

Where is she? She's usually back by nowâ€|

The Black Death let out a croon, the look of worry simply growing as time went on. He waited all through the night, hoping that his sister would come out of the darkness outside and land next to him. When it became difficult for him to keep his eyes open any longer, the dragon made a promise to itself.

When I wake up, I will not rest until I find my sister.

4. Chapter 4

****Reports of my death were... for a brief time, actually correct. However, even the crypt couldn't keep me from continuing this story, so enjoy the latest chapter!****

* * *

><p>Why did we need to do this in a maze?

The training session had only started a few minutes ago, but Frieda was already exhausted from it. This wasn't due to any amount of physical fatigue, but rather not knowing whether to go around the corner to face the Nadder was tiring in itself. Right now, her sword and shield weighed heavily on her.

If training keeps going like this, I don't think any of us will make it to the final exam!

Frieda's thoughts turned to the first day of training, to how Hiccup was nearly killed.

Why did I leave him yesterday?

Her "victory" in outlasting the Gronckle had caught the attention of Snotlout and his gang. They'd mostly ignored her until now, probably because she hung out with Hiccup, but now, they wanted to hang out with her. If she were honest, the attention felt nice, but after seeing them react to Hiccup in the hall yesterday, she felt torn.

Soon enough, Frieda stopped at one of the many entrances into the maze. She was trying to pull herself together when she noticed Hiccup, unaware of what was going on around him, talking to Gobber.

"So, Gobber, I looked through the manual, and found out there wasn't anything known about Night Furies. Is there any other information on them, or-"

"Your right, Hiccup."

"I am?"

"No, TO your right!"

Frieda looked to her right to see Fishlegs being chased by a screeching Nadderhead. She saw Hiccup turn to run just before she ran into the depths of the maze. After making a left turn and then a right, she came to an epiphany.

If I can help Hiccup succeed today, maybe the others would accept him. I just need to find him again.

With that in mind, the young Viking began to look for the tribe's heir. She rounded another corner, and crashed a wheezing and panicked

Fishlegs.

"Fishlegs! Did you see which direction Hiccup went?"

"Heâ€| the Nadderâ€| went after himâ€|"

With that, Frieda rushed off as quickly as she could. She tried to listen for the Nadder, but all she could hear was the twins as they presumably fought each other. She was about to tune them when she heard a loud squawk. After that, she heard Tuffnut and Ruffnut scream as they tried to get away.

Okay, the Nadder is no longer after Hiccup. That means he's either safe orâ€|

Frieda stopped that line of thought. She didn't want to think about the grim possibility, didn't want it to be true. She rushed around various turns before she finally found him, talking to Gobber yet again about Night Furies. This irritated her slightly, but at least Hiccup was alright.

Her relief went away with a squawk. Frieda turned to see the Deadly Nadder getting ready to charge.

"Hiccup!"

Before the heir could respond, the Nadder started to rush towards him. Acting quickly, Frieda dropped her sword and shield and tackled him out of the dragon's path. The Nadder hurtled past them and was unable to keep itself from crashing into one of the maze walls, causing them to fall over. The arena quickly descended into chaos, as the Frieda and the other teens tried to avoid getting caught under the collapsing walls.

Gotta keep moving, gotta keepâ€|

Out of the corner of her eye, Frieda saw one of the palisades tip towards her and Hiccup. Acting nearly on instinct, she pushed Hiccup out of the way before summersaulting in the opposite direction. Frieda quickly got up relatively unscathed, but the wall had caught Hiccup by his foot, and he struggled to get himself free. To make matters worse, the Nadder, which managed to avoid the walls, had the heir in its sights.

Frieda looked around for a weapon and quickly spotted Snotlout, pinned under another wall and still holding his mace. She sprinted over the debris, and was quickly next to him.

"Oh hey, Frieda. Nice to see ya here, and just in time to see meâ€|"

Frieda didn't bother listening to him, and simply took the mace out of his hand.

"Oh, okay, that's cool! Not like I needed that, you canâ€|"

Snotlout's voice trailed off as Frieda hurried back to Hiccup, the Nadder now nearly standing over him. Without a moment's hesitation, swung the mace, breaking several of the dragon's head spikes. The

Deadly Nadder recoiled in pain, and it retreated back to its cell.

Hiccup, having managed to free his foot by now, began to get up on his feet as he looked at his savior.

"Thanks, Frieda!"

"What in Thor's name was that, Hiccup?!"

Frieda stared the heir down, breathing in heavily as adrenaline still flowed through her.

"You're constantly obsessing over a dragon you haven't even seen! You're getting all of us distracted, and when you're not doing that, you're getting us deeper into trouble! Not only did you nearly get yourself killed again, but you almost got me killed too! What were you thinking?!"

The other teens were speechless, but none more so than Hiccup. Frieda had never acted like this before. She has always been somewhat less aggressive than most Vikings, and she had never yelled at anyone. She then asked a single question, with that same aggressive tone.

"Whose side are you on, Hiccup?"

* * *

><p>"*Whose side are you on, Hiccup?"*</p>

The sentence still repeated in Hiccup's head long after the arena was cleaned up. If he were honest with himself, he wasn't sure anymore, not since he cut the Night Fury free. Studying the Dragon Manual didn't help either, since there was absolutely no information on Night Furies. He also found it odd that, aside from the aforementioned dragon, the manual advised that every dragon be handled the same way.

Extremely dangerous, kill on sight.

His thoughts turned back to the thing he'd shot down. True, it was black and strong, as a Night Fury is supposed to be, but what sort of dragon looks even remotely human? Plus, why didn't it outright kill him? Something didn't add up, and that bugged him. Ultimately, he decided that if he was going to sort all this out, he'd need to learn more about what he had shot down.

By the time he neared where he last saw the Night Fury, the sun was just beginning to lower after reaching its high point. Hiccup looked down at what he was holding: a shield in his right hand, and a fish taken fresh from the docks in his left. The heir then took a deep breath to calm his nerves before he closed the distance to the dragon.

* * *

><p>Hearing something go through some bushes, Astrid turned to see that the boy came back, holding a shield in a somewhat awkward manner. Almost immediately, she twisted her body into a defensive stance, gritting her teeth as she moved her broken wing. She was in

no position to lunge at him in her current condition, but she could still fight back, still blast him with a bolt of flame. Astrid's eyes took a moment's glance to see what weapon the boy was wielding only for her to be confused, seeing a cod in his hand.<p>

Whaâ€|? NO, focus! He still has a shield, he is still dangerous.

She kept her attention on the shield, occasionally taking a glance at the obviously crazy Viking hiding from behind it.

* * *

><p>Hiccup stood completely still as he watched the thing glaring at him and his shield, its tail shifting from side to side in an increasingly rapid matter. He was worried that everything could go south very quickly if he did the wrong thing or, even more worryingly, nothing at all. His mind rushed to find a way to defuse the situation, or at the very least let him get out of this alive and mostly intact. Soon enough, he thought of something. It would be risky, but at least if it failed, he could run as fast as he could. Probably.<p>

* * *

><p>Becoming more and more irritated by the Viking's lack of action, Astrid was about to fire when he began to slowly lower the shield and set it on the ground before getting back up. Her mouth hung open slightly as her eyes scanned the shield before her attention went back to the boy. He was wary of what she could do, that she was sure of. What she didn't get was why he was doing any of this.<p>

Astrid's eyes briefly shifted to the cod, which the boy was holding near his chest, but she was determined to not show how hungry she was to the Viking. Her stomach growled just then, almost as if to spite her. Startled, the Viking moved his jacket to reveal a small blade, which in turn caused Astrid to return to a more defensive stance. Her mouth remained open so she could fire with little delay.

_You are __**not**__ going near me with that, Viking._

She focused on the blade, waiting for the boy to grab it in his free hand and to lunge at her. However, the boy instead lifted the blade by the tip of its handle and dropped it at his feet before kicking it into the bushes and leaving her dumbfounded.

Whyâ€| why not use the blade to try to kill me?

While she was still processing her thoughts, the Viking somewhat nervously held the fish to her. Coming back to what was happening, Astrid quickly took the fish out of the boy's hands, causing her stomach to growl in appeasement.

* * *

><p>Okay, not blown to bits yet.

While Hiccup was still a bit uneasy about being here, he was glad that things were going well so far. What relief he had quickly left

him, however, when the Night Fury stopped just before taking a bite from the fish.

This was a bad idea, a really, badâ€|_

Hiccup's thoughts came to a screeching halt as he watched the dragon breathed a small jet of flame out of her mouth, quickly cooking the fish before taking a bite out of it. Soon enough, all that was left was the head of the fish. The dragon was about to take a bite out of the fish, when its eyes then glanced in Hiccup's direction. Then, it suddenly holds the head out towards him

Maybe it had enough?

Hiccup gingerly took the fish head from the Night Fury, but noticed that it was still looking at him, as though it was expecting him to do something. After a moment, it pointed at the head and then bit the air. That was when it clicked; it wanted him to eat the fish head.

Oh, come on... Why did I have to come out here?

Reluctantly, Hiccup slowly took a bite. Being cooked, the fish head wasn't as bad as he thought it would be, but it was still bad. The heir swallowed and gave a nervous grin.

* * *

><p>For reasons she didn't know, the boy's smile caused Astrid to smile. However, hers shrank into a frown, as she started having conflicting thoughts. She wanted to know why the Viking came out here, why he helped her. She concentrated hard, trying to recall words that she had heard before and their meaning. After a moment, she looked back at the Viking and asked.<p>

"Why?"

What was left of the boy's smirk quickly disappeared. He just stood silent, his wide eyes focused on her. Astrid took this as a sign of confusion, and tried to clarify.

"Whyâ€| Did youâ€| Help me?"

* * *

><p>A dragon just talked. I must be losing my mind.

Still somewhat in shock, Hiccup wanted to clarify if he really just heard her talk.

"Did...Did you just say something?"

"â€|Yes. Why didâ€| you help?"

Hiccup tried to think of a good reason, but was under pressure.

"Why?"

"Iâ€| I don't know."

"Don't lie."

"Well, it's just, I...I thought you...were just hungry. I, uh, just gave you fish so you wouldn't starve to death."

"...What?"

"I just, uh..."

Hiccup paused to take a deep breath, in an effort to make sure he spoke in a coherent manner.

"I-I just wouldn't let you stay out here on your own. I was the one who shot you down, because I wanted to be the first Viking to have... well... But, when I looked at you, I saw a person instead of a dragon, someone scared, confused, completely helpless."

Hiccup's fear of the Night Fury was dwindling, as he started to trust that she would not blast him at this point.

He decided it was his turn to ask a question.

"How do you even know how to talk?"

"Watching andâ€¦ copying. Did that forâ€¦ a long time."

"...Okay, then."

* * *

><p>Is he done talking? It's getting late, and I need to find shelter.

Astrid, wanting to end the discussion, asked the boy if he was finished speaking.

"Done talking?"

"Uh...Yeah. I gotta...go...do a thing."

She watched the Viking begin to head back, and Astrid was about to begin looking for a suitable place to rest when the Viking turned back around.

"Wait, before I go, what's your name?"

The dragon girl stared at the boy for a while, wondering whether she should tell him or not, whether she could trust him or not. Her gaze then drifted to his eyes, and she saw no malicious intent within them. Astrid then sighed before finally giving a response.

"Astrid. Yours?"

"Oh, I'm Hiccup... I guess I'll see you tomorrow, thenâ€¦"

With an awkward wave, the boy walked off, back to the village. Astrid watched him go off, over the hill. After he was no longer in view, she said something to herself.

"Seeâ€¢ you then."

With that, she continued to find a place to reside in her local area.

* * *

><p>A talking dragon...Oh, the Gods have a cruel sense of humor.

Hiccup wandered back to Berk, when he noticed a campfire, with some people having discussions around it. He focused more to see it was Gobber and the Vikings in training, Frieda included. Curious what was going on, he decided to join their gathering to see they were discussing.

* * *

><p>And with that, the current chapter is done!

This chapter took a good amount of time to fine tune, as it had to cover two very important things. Obviously, the chapter would have covered the first prolonged social interaction between Astrid and Hiccup, but more on that in a bit. The chapter also was intended to flesh out Frieda a bit more. A lot of time was put into the first half of the chapter, and it was actually completed after the second half. I wanted to make Frieda sympathetic, even when she finally lashes out at Hiccup. Hopefully, I pulled that off.

The second half was a bit easier to have written out, though it was still a challenge. The first thing I wrote for this chapter was Astrid asking "why" to Hiccup. All in all, this was fun to write, and I'm curious as to what is your favorite part. See ya all around next time!

5. Chapter 5

Merry (late) Christmas, everyone! Got some stuff to say, but first, the story!

* * *

><p>How long have they been here?

Hiccup made his way up the catapult tower where Gobber and the other trainees were. He could hear the voices of everyone but Frieda, and he couldn't help but wonder whether she was even up there or not. After taking a few more steps, Hiccup saw that she was indeed there, just being incredibly quiet. He was about to turn back when he heard Gobber call his name.

"Hey, Hiccup, where have you been?! Do you know how long I've been holding onto this for ya?"

Snotlout and the twins moaned in disappointment at the mention of his name, causing a sour look to come on Gobber's face.

"Hey, none of that now. The point of being up here was to get you all

ready for tomorrow. You're going to need to watch each other's backs, that Zippleback is a sneaky little devil!"

"Fine." Snotlout gave another moan.

"Whatever!" Tuffnut mutters just before being hit in the shoulder by his sister, causing the two to pummel one another as their food begins to burn. Fishlegs, clearly wishing for things to turn back to how they were before Hiccup showed up, decided to speak up.

"So, Gobber, how did you lose your hand, again? It was a dragon that tore it off, right?"

"Eh? Oh, yes. The dragon took my hand clean off with one nasty bite. And I could tell, by the look on its face, that it was the best hand it'd ever tasted. Must've spread the word to its friends, because it was barely a month before another took my leg. In hindsight, I did have a clean shot for the wing. Woulda been an eye for an eye."

"Oh, yeah, that's right, you damage the wings, and they can't fly away anymore!"

Gobber hummed in agreement before saying, "If it's downed, it's dead."

This got Hiccup's attention, though he tried to not make it apparent. His thoughts drifted back to Astrid, he realized that one of her wings was clearly broken.

How didn't I notice that before?

After a moment of mentally scolding himself, he decided that since he was the one who hurt her, he was going to help her. As the night went on, Hiccup planned what he needed to do, and once the group dispersed, he headed to the forge to get to work.

* * *

><p>Waking up to the starry night sky, Toothless quickly spread his wings and took off to start his search for his sister. The dragon had some ideas where his kin could be, though he'd hope she wasn't on one particular island.</p>

If she is, though, I hope that the humans haven't found her.

He started his search amongst a sea of great pillars of stone. Astrid might have been there the whole time, catching a meal or two, as the pillars provide a great hunting ground, as well as plenty of spots to eat. After a great deal of thorough searching here, however, Toothless found nothing.

Toothless, starting to worry a bit more, decided to continue his search on the next island. This one reminded the dragon of the moon during some nights. Now, though, the island's appearance wasn't important, whether his sister was there was. The hunt for Astrid turned up only a couple of Rock-eaters, though, and with the sun beginning to peak over the horizon, Toothless decided it'd be best to continue the search the following evening.

* * *

><p>Did I come out here for nothing?

Hiccup had expected to find Astrid near the same spot she was yesterday, but it appeared that she was nowhere to be found. He did say he'd see her again today, didn't he? Either way, he felt a bit foolish for carrying a large and heavy basket with him, among other things. Still, with that broken wing, she couldn't have gone far.

"Astrid? Astrid, where are you?!"

Hiccup started to look around when he heard something rustling in the bushes. He turned to see what was causing it, and was surprised to see that it was Astrid, reluctant to see him.

"Why were you hiding?"

"To see ifâ€| you had a blade."

"I can barely even carry a dagger at this point."

Hiccup dropped the basket from his back, and with his now free hand, opened the top to reveal the basket's contents.

"Fresh fish, straight from the harbor!"

Upon hearing this, the dragon girl made her way over to the basket and shifted through some of its contents a bit before turning to look back at Hiccup.

"Thank youâ€|"

"No problem, Astrid."

The dragon girl turned her attention back to the basket, and started digging through its contents.

"Whatâ€| did you bring?"

"Uh, I wasn't sure what you liked, exactly, so I brought a few things. There's some tuna, a fresh salmonâ€| oh, and a whole smokedâ€|"

Astrid interrupted him with a shriek, backing away from the basket as quickly as she could. After hastily setting the bag in his hand down, he checked the basket for anything wrong, only to see the smoked eel atop the other fish.

Is this what she was scared of?

Hiccup slowly lifted the eel out to gauge Astrid's reaction, she took another step back as her already frantic breathes became faster.

Yep, definitely the eel.

Seeing that Astrid's level of panic was still rising, Hiccup quickly tossed it away. Almost immediately, he could see that she was already calming down.

"You're afraid of eels? Why?"

* * *

><p>It took Astrid a moment before she was able to process Hiccup's question, and when she finally did, the dragon girl found that she couldn't answer right away. After another moment, she spoke.</p>

"Brother wasâ€| always afraid of them. Iâ€| don't know whyâ€| "

Astrid stopped as she noticed the bag that Hiccup brought with him.

"What isâ€| in that?"

"Huh?"

Hiccup turned to where Astrid was looking before turning back to her.

"Oh, that. Wellâ€| "

The boy moved back to the mysterious bag and pulled out its contents: a pair of metal rods and some leather straps.

"It was my fault that your wing is broken, so I brought these to make a splint for your wing."

"Aâ€| splint?"

"Yeah, sort of a brace for a broken limb. Now, if you wouldâ€| "

Hiccup made a step towards her, but he stopped after she took a step away from him. She saw the look of confusion on his face, and sighed.

"Sorry, butâ€| I don'tâ€| "

"...You don't know if you can trust me enough yet, do you?" Hiccup interrupted.

"Yes, that."

Astrid turned her attention downwards, not wanting to see the look of disappointment on Hiccup's face. After a moment, she heard him take a deep breath and sigh.

"Well, even if you don't trust me, you may never be able to fly again if you don't let me help you. Do you really want that?"

Astrid snapped her head towards his and looked into his eyes, just like she did the day before. Just as before, she could see that he meant no harm.

"Okayâ€| put it on."

"Alright. It'd probably be best if you could lay on your side for this."

Slowly, Astrid went into the Viking's suggested position, extending her broken wing as much as she could as Hiccup made his way around her. Her wing hurt, but she was able to bring her wing into its extended position just as it came to rest on the flat ground, and with that done, she waited.

* * *

><p>Taking great care not to cause any more pain, Hiccup placed the two rods along the broken bone and began to wrap the wing in leather. After a few moments, Hiccup noticed that Astrid was stiff and silent, with her tail coiled away from him.</p>

She's still uncomfortable with going through with this. Got to get her mind off this.

"Soooooâ€|" Hiccup saw Astrid react with a jolt, "did you ever think about talking to a Viking before? Don't know why you'd learn to talk if you didn't."

At first, Astrid didn't respond, and Hiccup wondered if he overstepped some bounds. His worries disappeared when she took a deep breath, uncoiling her tail a bit as she did so.

"Yes. Haven't spoke to anyone. Expectedâ€| to be killed. Still, hoped."

"Well, I guess you got your wish granted then."

"Wish?"

The dragon girl turned her head to look at him, the look of confusion clear on her face. Hiccup couldn't keep himself from smiling just a bit, there was just something about the way she looked that was amusing in an odd sort of way.

"Yeah, uh, kind of a deep want of something, you know?"

"Oh."

Astrid turned her head away from his, seemingly processing what he just said. It wasn't too long before her attention went back to him.

"What doâ€| people wish for?"

Hiccup scratched his head a bit at this.

"Well...It sort of depends on who the person is. Some people are small and want power to compensate, others already have it, and just want more time with their friends and family..."

"So...you want power? You're small."

"Huh? Oh, no no no, I'm not like that, I was just generalizing... It really does depend on who the person is."

"Whatâ€| do you wish for, then?"

"I... I'm not sure what I wish for anymore..."

"Ohâ€| "

An awkward silence fell between the two, and Hiccup tried to think of something new to talk about. To his surprise, Astrid beat him to it.

"How do you know toâ€| make a splint?"

"Ohâ€| wellâ€| "

While this wasn't really much of a tender subject for him, Hiccup worried that telling her how he knew would make her feel uncomfortable. He glanced at her face, saw that curious expression of hers, and ultimately decided to relent.

"Okay, so back in my village, sometimes I try to help out with some of the work that needs to be done. Usually, I try to make something that would help get things done with less workâ€| it doesn't always work out so well, and one time I got my arm broken because of it. Wasn't too bad, got healed up, but I had to wear a splint for awhile, and here we are."

"Ohâ€| "

>Hiccup expected her to tense back up. However, she did the opposite, becoming a bit more relaxed.<p>

"That is good to hear."

Hiccup smiled at this, though he was a bit confused as to how what he said was so reassuring. As for the splint, it was almost complete. The teen ultimately decided to ask one last question before finishing the job.

"Soâ€| are there any others like you?"

"â€| I want to say yes, butâ€| "

Hiccup immediately regretted asking the question, and it only got worse after he remembered her mentioning her brother.

Oh godsâ€| She's all aloneâ€| she's the last Night Furyâ€|

Hiccup froze after realization hit him. Astrid apparently noticed this, because it wasn't long before she spoke up.

"Hiccupâ€| the splint?"

"Huh? Oh, right."

Though the realization still lingered at the edges of his mind, Hiccup turned his focus back to the strap. After a few more moments of work, he got up to look at the result of his work.

"Alright, that should do it."

* * *

><p>Astrid quickly got off her side and took a moment to inspect the newly applied splint. It felt odd on her wing, but it wasn't painful.<p>

"How long will my wing need this?"

"Probably not too long, my arm was fine after a few weeks. I don't know if the same applies to wings, though."

"Hmmmmâ€| "

Astrid turned to ask Hiccup how she'll know when the splint was no longer needed. She stopped when she saw Hiccup pick up the eel and hide it away in his vest, a shiver running down her spine as it disappeared from sight. The Viking then began to head back in the direction she saw him come from.

"Well, I got to get going. See you tomorrow, Astrid."

"Where are youâ€| going?"

Hiccup turned back to her, his face scrunched up in thought.

"Well, I gotta go to dragon trainingâ€| "

"Dragonâ€| training?"

"Yeah. We're taught how toâ€| um, fight dragonsâ€| "

"Ohâ€| "

"We, uh, don't kill any. Well, not until the final exam anyway. Right now, it's more like we're learning how not to get killed."

"Oh. Wouldâ€| would you mind if I watch, then?"

Hiccup's eyes went wide, clearly surprised by her request.

"You want to watch us fight dragons?"

"Yeah."

"Okay thenâ€| Um, I can't really take you into the village for obviousâ€| but I think you may be able to watch from the cliff that overlooks it. The arena should beâ€|" Hiccup turned a bit, trying to figure out which direction it would be, "that way, I think. You'll know if you see something like a big, round cage."

"Thanksâ€| "

"Not a problem. See you tomorrow thenâ€| "

* * *

><p>Having said his farewell, Hiccup made his way back towards Berk. He was about to head towards the docks to replace the eel in another basket, no sense in getting rid of something someone caught, when Gobber spotted him.<p>

"There you are, lad! Where do you keep disappearing off to? We almost had to start training without ya."

"Uh, could it wait, I gotta--"

"No, it can't wait, Hiccup. Can't keep the dragons waiting, you know?"

Hiccup tried to protest further, but Gobber simply dragged him as he went to the arena.

* * *

><p>Though she still wasn't able to fly, Astrid was able to reach the cliff Hiccup mentioned relatively quickly, in part due to the splint he gave her. Taking care to make sure that little of herself could be spotted, Astrid looked over the cliff side to see if she could see what Hiccup described. Sure enough, there was the arena, and it appeared that training hadn't started yet. Focusing a bit, she saw five Vikings in the cage, though none of them looked like Hiccup. It wasn't long until he arrived, though, being dragged by an older Viking.<p>

Ok, let's see how well Hiccup is.

* * *

><p>As the two neared the arena, Gobber finally let go of Hiccup, who had stopped resisting a good while ago, before he handed the heir a bucket full of water. Hiccup was briefly puzzled as to why he was handed this, but Gobber interrupted him before he could question him.<p>

"Alright, Hiccup. The others already paired up, so you're being partnered with Snotlout today. Do your best, lad."

With that, Gobber gave Hiccup a pat on the shoulder, before shoving him into the ring, nearly making the teen spill his bucket. Hiccup was able to right himself just as the gate behind him slammed shut, and he headed towards the other teens, lining up next to a clearly displeased Snotlout.

"Hey, don't think just because Gobber made us partners for today that we're buddies. Don't get in the way, or I'llâ€"

The doors to the Zippelback's cell burst open with a cloud of green gas, causing Snotlout to jump. Moving quickly, the cousins reluctantly covered each other's backs, and Gobber began the day's lessons.

"Today is all about teamwork. Now, a wet dragon head can't light its fire. The Hideous Zippelback is extra tricky. One head breathes gas, the other head lights it. Your job is to know the difference between the two."

"Hiccup scanned the increasingly thick haze as best as he could. Snotlout, doing the same, couldn't help but complain about the situation." Soon enough, the arena was nearly dead silent.

A shriek pierced the silence, and Hiccup could tell that it was Fishlegs who made it. A yelp from Tuffnut followed suit, and it wasn't too long before shouts could be heard from the girls. Now, the arena was quiet again.

"Okay Hiccup, here's the planâ€|"

"What plan?"

"When we see that Zippelback, I'm going hit it with this bucket after soaking its head. And thenâ€| there!"

Hiccup turned just in time to see Snotlout toss water at one of the Zippelback's heads that had poked through the wall of gas. He was able to land a hit before the head moved out of Snotlout's reach and spewed gas all over him. A second head appeared from the fog and produced sparks in a menacing manner, causing the Viking to take a step back.

"Uhhhhâ€| Sorry Hiccup, you're on your own!"

With that, Snotlout sped off towards the entrance, leaving Hiccup to fend for himself. The fog began to dissipate, allowing the heir to see the entirety of Zippelback as it approached him. Hiccup attempted to get the sparking head wet, but it was able to evade the attempt.

"Oh come onâ€|"

The Zippelback made its move, advancing quickly and forcing Hiccup to stumble and fall. Gobber was quick to rush to his aid, though likely not quick enough. It didn't seem to matter, though, as Gobber noticed the green dragon suddenly flinch away from Hiccup.

"Alright, back! Don't even think about it!"

The Zippelback was making an attempt to strike at Hiccup again, but was repeatedly repelled by an unknown odor. As Hiccup was pacifying the beast, the rest of the trainees, as well as Gobber, looked on in astonishment, unable to figure out what they were looking at.

"Go on, then, back in the cage now!"

With everyone behind his back, Hiccup slipped out a familiar object. It was the eel that Astrid so feared.

Maybe it's a good thing I didn't get rid of that eel yet...

"Now think about what you've done..."

Having said that, Hiccup then tossed the eel in with the Zippelback just as the cell doors closed. He was about to head home for the day when he saw the shocked expressions on the other Vikings' faces. Frieda looked especially stunned.

"So, if there's nothing else, because Iâ€| have to goâ€|

* * *

><p>That was close, Hiccupâ€|

Astrid didn't know what she expected to see happen down in the arena, though whatever it was, it wasn't that. In any case, she was glad that Hiccup kept the eel with him.

Did he do that on purpose? May have to ask him tomorrowâ€|_

Taking one last look down at the arena, she headed back to where she left the basket of fish Hiccup gave her. On her way there, her mind drifted back to the topic of wishes.

What do I wish for?

* * *

><p>Ok, done for the day. Hopefully, I'll be able to make the next chapter a lot sooner.

This chapter, was interesting to say the least. Sooooo many things going on, with dragon training going on, more interactions between Astrid and Hiccup as well, and a bit from Toothless's point of view on the side.

Speaking of which, writing for Toothless was interesting, to say the least. I tried to write him in a different manner than the other characters, and there are numerous ways to take his character. I've seen other writers do everything from making him a glorified dog/cat to making him act like a person in a dragon's body. For this story, I'm trying to do something in between, probably best described as having the computational power of a human, but processes information like an animal. Don't know how well I did on that front, so I'll probably have to practice writing for Toothless on the side.

As always, writing the bits where Astrid and Hiccup speak to each other was a blast! Probably my favorite bit to come out of it was the whole "wish" topic. It wasn't something that was planned originally, but the topic of wishes might play a bit more of role now that I think about it. We'll have to wait and see how that turns out.

Now for Holiday stuff. First off, in addition to helping me with this chapter, Darkenn has also drawn a new pic of Astrid for the festivities. You can find a link in my profile page on this site.

Secondly, when I first set out to do this, I originally planned to do a Snoggletog-related chapter/special, but then... well, I hadn't gotten far enough to do that, so now comes a somewhat difficult choice. I can either wait till next year to do a special, regardless of whether I got far enough in the story, or when the story finally reaches the point to do so, I can write up a Snoggletog chapter, regardless of what time of year it is. I'm hesitant to make a poll for this, so let me know what you think either via PM or in your review for the chapter.

Anyhow, hoped you all enjoyed the holidays, and I wish you all a happy New Year!

How did he do that?

Despite the chicken leg in front of her, Frieda wasn't particularly hungry. While the leg was still somewhat warm, she had been in the great hall for most of the day, only grabbing the leg a little while ago when she noticed that the other villagers started grabbing a bite to eat. Gobber had canceled dragon training for the day so that she and the others could rest, though part of her felt it was due to the weather outside. It wasn't raining when Frieda woke up, but the skies looked like they were ready to pour.

Next to her, her fellow trainees were still buzzing about what happened the day before, and they weren't the only ones. News of what Hiccup did in the arena quickly spread throughout the village. There were some that were skeptical about his triumph over the Zippelback, calling it a fluke, others were hopeful that this was a sign for things to come from the boy.

As for Frieda, she was still focused on trying to figure out what exactly Hiccup did. She was glad that he was able to get out of the match okay, let alone be able to do what he did, but something didn't add up.

What did you do, Hiccup?

* * *

><p>Though there were many things that Hiccup enjoyed about being Gobber's apprentice, the heat was not one of them. There were still a few weapons that needed to be mended after the last raid, and while it wasn't exactly dull, it was still tedious, and the heat from the forge wasn't exactly helping.<p>

After straightening out another bent up sword, Hiccup took the opportunity to get out of the smithy to cool off. Once he was outside, Hiccup saw that the clouds were far darker than they were earlier; the sun was beginning to go down. Astrid came to mind, her only shelter from the upcoming rain being the trees nearby. It wasn't much, but what else was there?

Suddenly, an idea popped into Hiccup's head. It was crazy, but it was better than letting Astrid stay where she was. With this in mind, Hiccup bolted towards Raven's Point.

* * *

><p>Astrid wearily watched the dim sky above, well aware what it would bring. While it wasn't the first time she'd have to deal with rain since she was shot down, she'd still rather not deal with it at all. Normally, the dragon girl would go looking for a cave to hold up in as to remain dry, but with her broken wing, it'd take too long to find one. However, with the splint, she might just be able to fit into the nearby cove's entryway.<p>

Astrid turned her gaze towards the leather bandage wrapped around her wing, her mind beginning to wander. For as long as she could remember, Vikings have always been fascinating to her, and it wasn't lost on her as to why that was so. She may have been raised among dragons, but it was clear as day that she wasn't one of them, not

completely.

The dragon girl chuckled as a thought came to mind. Since she first flew, she wanted to go into a village, to interact with the people who lived there, but she knew she would be killed if she did. Now, though she could no longer fly, she had a Viking meet her, talk to her, and even help her.

It wasn't long before the first few drops of rain started to fall. However, the snapping of a twig behind her distracted her from that fact. Astrid quickly turned, expecting anything but Hiccup, who was bent over and gasping for air.

"Hiccup? Why are you here?"

The boy took a few deep breaths before looking up to her.

"Oh hey! Astrid. Just give me a second."

Astrid watched, as the Viking took a few more gasps of air. Her brow raised, before he stood up straight, finally catching his breath.

"So... I was thinking that, so that you don't get the brunt of the storm, that maybe you could stay at my home for the night?"

The dragon girl stared at Hiccup as though he grew another head for a brief moment. After hearing that, she let out a breath.

"Hiccup, thanks but it would not be safe for me. Can't go into the village. Would be attacked."

"You wouldn't have to come into the village. My home is at the edge of it. Besides, it'll be night soon, you should be able to sneak in through the back door. No one will see you, and if anything happens, I'll make sure you are safe."

Astrid was about to continue rejecting his offer, but it was clear in his eyes how determined and sure he was.

Well, at least, I won't be out in this weather.

"Okay."

"Really? I mean, great! Let's get going so we don't get completely wet."

With that, she followed Hiccup. As she continued to follow, it got darker and the rain poured more heavily. As they left the edges of the forest, Astrid was already beginning to regret agreeing to come to Hiccup's home. Just as the temptation to head back appeared in her head, though, Astrid spotted a relatively large building.

Probably his home, hopefully.

Hiccup headed towards the structure and opened the door before, she thinks, inviting her in. Once Astrid walked through the door, Hiccup followed and closed it, shrouding them in darkness. Despite this, Astrid was still able to see. A bump and yelp told her that the same

couldn't be said for Hiccup.

"Are youâ€| okay, Hiccup?"

"Y-yeah, I'm fine. Just stubbed my toe. Just need to light the pit, that's all."

With that, Hiccup made his way towards another entryway, this time making more cautious steps. Astrid followed after him and found herself in a far larger room. To her left, she spotted a structure covered with items, some of which smelled like food to her. A grunt of effort turned her attention back to Hiccup, who was rubbing a stick atop a pile of wood. He was producing sparks, but nothing was coming from them. An idea popped into her head, and she made her way towards the opposite side of the pit. After a moment, Hiccup stopped and sat up straight, looking around as if trying to spot something.

"Astrid, where areâ€| "

The Viking gave another yelp as a bolt of flame hit the wood pile, setting it alight. Hiccup's jaw hung wide open as he gazed at the fire, then to her face, her smile now clear as day to him.

"Oh, right. You can breathe fire."

"Should haveâ€| asked if you neededâ€| fire."

"I just kind of forgot you could."

This wiped the smirk from Astrid's face as her eyes widened slightly at this comment.

"Whyâ€| that?"

"I don't know, I just never thought about after a while."

"Oh."

Astrid looked away, her attention turning back to the various things that covered the room now brighter. While she could see them before, she was only able to see the shapes and none of the details such as color. Among them was a row of shields covering the wall, accompanied by various weapons. She took a few steps closer, looking at the images on the shields. The dragon girl's gaze went over every detail of shields. Of them, the one that caught her attention the most was one of a Viking's face, toothy mouth wide open with something coming out of it.

A clang behind her caused Astrid to turn to see Hiccup hanging a round container over the fire, something that wasn't lost on the boy.

"Hope you're in the mood for boar and cabbage stew, because that's what I have here tonight."

"Stew?"

Hiccup took a confused look at her before realization appeared on his

face.

"Oh, you probably never had some. It's likeâ€| uh, cooked meat and other things in aâ€| just try it when it's ready, I don't really know how to explain it."

"Ohâ€| "

Astrid looked at Hiccup, not knowing how to respond to that. After a moment, she decided to change the subject.

"Hiccup, what isâ€| on this shield?"

Astrid pointed at the shield with the berserk Viking painted on it.

"That's a painting of my dad."

"Your dad?"

"Yeah. His name is Stoick the Vast. He's also the chieftainâ€| the leader of the tribe."

Astrid's eyes widened slightly at this for a brief moment before she asked another question.

"Where is yourâ€| dad? Shouldn't he beâ€| with you?"

"He went out to lead an attack on the dragon'sâ€| your nest. He wa-"

"It's notâ€| our nest."

"Well, he went to find where you all go after a raid on us, so he can make the attacks stop."

"â€|he won'tâ€| be able to find it, Hiccup."

"Why's that?"

"He can'tâ€| only those who can flyâ€| can."

"Oh."

Silence fell between the two for a moment before Hiccup head towards the table. Grabbing a couple of round objects, he went back to the container and poured a bit of its contents into them.

"Well, the stew's ready, why don't you come here and take a bowl."

With that, Astrid made her way towards the fire pit and took the bowl Hiccup handed to her. Within it, bits of meat and what was presumably cabbage floated within a brown liquid. It didn't look appealing to her, but it smelled good.

Well, I guess I can try this._

The dragon girl poured some of the bowls contents into her mouth. As soon as it touched her tongue, she was glad that she had tried the

stew.

"Uh, Astrid?"

The dragon girl lowered the bowl so she could give Hiccup her attention.

"You're supposed to use one of these to bring the stew to your mouth."

Hiccup held out a small stick with an indentation in it, presumably so it could carry some of her bowl's contents.

"Oh."

Astrid gave a small chuckle before taking the stick out of Hiccup's hand. The boy then continued to eat, and she watched him as he used his own, imitating him. Using the stick felt odd to her, but she felt compelled to finish off the stew this way. Astrid was a few bites away from finishing the bowl when Hiccup cleared his throat, grabbing her attention.

"Soâ€| I was wonderingâ€| what's it like? Living out thereâ€|?"

Astrid opened her mouth to give a response, but was unable to do so. Her attention went back to her bowl, as though her answer would be found within it.

"Iâ€| I do not know... It is all I know, don't know anything elseâ€| not until now."

The dragon girl turned her gaze back to Hiccup, who had been paying full attention to her.

"Sometimes it isâ€| tough, sometimes it is not. I just doâ€| what I needâ€| to do to live."

"I-I see."

Hiccup looked away from her and back to his bowl, allowing Astrid the opportunity to finish what little was left in her bowl before putting the stick in it. For a moment, Astrid looked around for a place to put the bowl down.

"I can take that for you, Astrid."

"Oh. Thank you, Hiccup."

The boy took her bowl before going into the other room. When he came back, Hiccup gave a yawn. In his hands was another bowl, this one with a small flame in the middle.

"Well, I don't know about you, but I think it's about time we get some sleep."

To this, Astrid gave a small nod. If she were honest, she hadn't been sleeping as regularly as she used to before the crash.

"Alright, I'll show where you can sleep tonight."

With that, Astrid got up from her seat and followed him upstairs to another room.

"All right, just this way, watch your step, and here we are!"

Astrid looked around the room. Unlike the main area below, there were far fewer items on the wall. In fact, there were only three structures in this one, though one of them was cluttered with numerous other items. The dragon girl walked up to this particular structure, looking at the images on the items.

"Hiccupâ€| what are all these?"

"Just things I've been working on, some needing it more than others. I'd show what they are, but it's kinda late. I'd be happy to show you when you wake up."

"Okay... then."

"Anywayâ€| "

Hiccup walked towards the longest of the three structures. Atop it was a cloth and a rounded object that looked relatively soft.

"You can have my bed for tonight."

"Bed?"

"Yeah, we sleep on them, rather than on the floor."

"Thenâ€| where will-"

"I'll sleep downstairs. My dad is not here, I'll just use his."

"Ohâ€| thanks."

"Not a problem, Astrid, see you in the morning."

With that, Hiccup went back down below, leaving Astrid in the dark. She made her way to Hiccup's bed before resting atop of it. However, she had trouble getting comfortable.

How does he sleep on this? This is harder than the ground.

After much tossing and turning, Astrid found the position she was most comfortable with. It wasn't long afterwards before she fell asleep.

* * *

><p>Well, this was a unique chapter, to say the least.

The concept for this chapter came about actually while I was writing the fifth chapter. A particularly nasty rainstorm rolled in, soaking anything that went outside. One thing led to another, and well, we have a chapter where Astrid stays a night in Hiccup's home.

This chapter also allowed me to expand on Astrid a little bit. Though she is the main female character, as well as what gives this fic its name, Astrid has had less screen time than Hiccup. This was the perfect opportunity to fix that.

Anyhow, I hope you all enjoyed this chapter. I aim to have the next one up in two weeks at the most. Been experimenting with ways to get myself to write more often, and some things are providing excellent results. Till next time!

7. Chapter 7

Despite waking up with a dragon underneath his roof, Hiccup felt as though his morning was turning out rather well, if uneventful. Astrid was finishing up her breakfast opposite of him at the table, much to his delight. While he had to wake up relatively early to be able to sneak a few fish, it was worth it to see the dragon girl happy. It wasn't long before she finished up her meal, leaving only assorted fish bones on her plate. Before he could start cleaning up the table, Astrid pulled on his shirt.

"You saidâ€| you'd show me what's on yourâ€| desk."

"What are youâ€| OH, right, yeah. Let's do that."

As the two made their way upstairs, Hiccup's face went more and more pale as he thought about what exactly he was about to show her.

I'm about to show her all my weapon designs. This is not going to end well for me._

* * *

><p>Astrid was a bit excited to see exactly what Hiccup was up to. While part of the reason was to get to know Vikings better, that wasn't the primary urge driving her on this. Hiccup had been kind to her, and she wanted to get know him better. She wanted to be his friend.<p>

The two neared Hiccup's desk, but she couldn't help but notice how nervous he was getting.

"Hiccupâ€| is somethingâ€| wrong?"

"Astridâ€| I'mâ€| Are you sure you want to look at the boring old stuff on my desk? I mean, there's so much we can look atâ€| like the downstairs!"

"Butâ€| we've already been thereâ€| "

"Umâ€| "

Hiccup furrowed his brows as it looked like he was trying to think of something, before giving up.

"I'm sorry, Astrid. It's just that, well, I used that table to draw up designs to help, wellâ€| kill dragons."

Her eyes widened a bit at the revelation as she watched him. He looked so apologetic, so guilty, like he actually killed something.

"Butâ€| did you?"

"Did I what?"

"Kill a dragon?"

Hiccup's eyes went wide.

"What, no! None of my inventions haveâ€| really worked right. The only thing that did wasâ€| the net launcher that I shot you down with." His voice was now low and quiet, and he would barely look at her. She simply stared at him as she processed what he said before her gaze softened and the dragongirl put her hand on his shoulder. He looked back at her, somewhat curious and partially hopeful.

"Thenâ€| then it's fineâ€| "

"Butâ€| "

"You didn't do wrong...You were just protecting your home."

"Iâ€| Thank you, Astrid."

She simply smiled, happy that he got this off his chest. She simply stood there for a moment, taking in the comfortable silence between them.

* * *

><p>That, however, came to a grinding halt when the two of them heard a knock at the door.</p>

"Hiccup?"

Hiccup's eyes went wide as he realized quickly just who was at the door.

"That's Frieda! We can't let her see you!"

"Wellâ€| wha-"

"Shh! We need to be quiet."

"Whatâ€| should we do?"

For a moment, Hiccup racked his head for an answer before he was able to formulate a plan.

"I'll go talk to her, and you head back to the forest. It should be early enough that you can get away without anyone seeing you, but be careful!"

She gave a nod, and the two went down the stairs, Hiccup coming down a bit slower while she dashed for the back. In a matter of moments, the two of them were at the doors on the opposite side of the house before he went through the front to see that Frieda was right in

front of him. She didn't look happy.

"Oh, he-hey Frieda. It's been a while, hasn't it?"

"Nice to see you, Hiccup."

"Sooooâ€| what are you doing here."

"I was checking in on youâ€|" Her voice slowed as the two of them heard the back door open and closed in a swift manner.

"What wasâ€| ?"

"Oh that? Backdraft. Door's been a bit looseâ€|" At this point, he hoped she bought it. At the same time, knowing her, she probably didn't.

"Are you sure? It was fine last time I visited."

Darn it!

"Well, the door was broken in the last raid, and we needed a new door! As you can hear, it still needs adjustments."

"Wellâ€| fine."

Yes!

"Anyhow, you coming to Dragon Training? It's just about to start."

"Yeah yeah, just let me get my stuff, I'll see you there!"

Frieda looked hesitant to leave, but after a moment, she gave him a small nod and smile before heading down the hill. Once she was out of view, he let out a breath.

That was close. It'd probably be best to not do this again, at least for a while.

With that, he went back in and got his helmet and axe.

* * *

><p>Frieda brushed the sweat off her forehead, sword barely in hand. It was a bit difficult, but she had managed to knock the Gronkle unconscious with her shield. The other teens were cheering her name now that the dragon was put back in its pen, though she noted that one voice was missing. After looking around, she realized that Hiccup had already left.<p>

She furrowed her brows, a bit frustrated with him. After his skittish behavior this morning, something felt off. However she didn't look too deeply into it since she was a friend who respected his privacy. Still, during the match, all he did was stay in the far corner, hoping not to be noticed. Nobody really noticed, they had their eyes on her the whole time.

Something felt off with him, like he was keeping a secret from her. Frieda felt hurt by this. He was her closest friend, and now he'd

barely speak with her. Part of her wanted to pummel him, another simply wanted to know so he could stop tip-toeing around her. To that end, she decided she'd either confront the boy, or find out what he was doing.

* * *

><p>Hiccup quickly made his way out of the arena and the village, sweating a bit as the sun beat down on him. While glad that Frieda caught everyone's attention, he felt guilty not telling her anything. Still, it was for the best, not only for him, but for Astrid.<p>

Although it took a while to reach the spot Astrid usually hung around at, he eventually was able to reach it soon enough. As he looked about for her, he noticed that she was nowhere to be seen. He checked her past hiding spots, but found nothing. He was about to call out to her when he spotted a black finned tail coming from around a nearby boulder.

"Oh hey Ast-"

As he walked around the boulder, he saw Astrid, but she wasn't alone. She also wasn't the owner of the tail that he found. Rather, a black dragon with large wings and fierce green eyes was the one he had spotted. Its teeth were bared at the heir as it looked ready to lunge.

* * *

><p>Author's note: SORRY SORRY SORRY SORRY I'M SO SORRY!

Ahem, yes, sorry this one took so long. Part of the problem was going about it, honestly. Previously, I would write chapters with an unbroken sequence of events (read: no time skips,) but... that got tedious fast, especially for this chapter which really served to set up some cool stuff later down the line. That's also why this chapter is so, well, short.

That said, I have two announcements to make! First off, I'm going through old chapters to fix errors that evaded me the first time as well as improve some... lackluster dialogue. Secondly, I'm announcing I'll be writing a Christmas (or rather, Snoggletog) special of sorts for Hybrid. I got a few ideas to shift through, but once I pick one, I'll have it written up just in time for the Holidays!

End
file.